

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Mr. X: Two Centers of World Significance

Standard:

- I. Culture
- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environments
- IV. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
- IX. Global Connections

Grade Level:

9–12 (analysis, comparisons)

Objectives:

The student will:

- Analyze the key parts of the “Long Telegram”
- Makes decisions about what course of action President Truman should pursue after receiving the telegram
- Use technology to research key components of the change in U.S. foreign policy toward the Soviet Union

Time:

2 class periods

Materials:

Documents: **1946 The Long Telegram**

Exercises: *Report to the President*
A Secret Analysis Parts I & II

Materials: 3" x 5" index cards

Access to laptops

http://www.johndclare.net/cold_war7_Kennan_interview.htm

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/sectioned.php?documentid=4-1&pagenumber=1&groupid=1

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

Diplomat George Kennan had been living in the Soviet Union since 1933 and was a keen observer of Soviet society, rising to the rank of Minister Counselor under Ambassador Averill Harriman. In February 1946, the Department of the Treasury asked the Embassy why the Soviets were not supporting the new World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Kennan sent an 8,000-word “long” telegram in response.

In July 1946 presidential advisor Clark Clifford wrote an analysis for the President based on the Long Telegram designed to translate it into policy plans. The report went to the President but had no further distribution and remained Top Secret until the 1960s.

Kennan’s Long Telegram is considered to be one of the most influential analyses of the Soviet Union and its policy written during the Cold War years. An expanded version of the telegram was published in the journal, *Foreign Affairs*, in 1947. Most insiders knew who wrote the article—even though Kennan signed it with an “X.”

Day One

Have laptops available for student use.

- 1.** Ask students what they know about spies and secret agents? (You will get a wide variety of responses of course)
- 2.** Tell them that they are going to look at a telegram that changed the course of American foreign policy based on the analysis of one man: George Kennan.
- 3.** Ask them to access the website with the 1996 Kennan interview and to read it.
- 4.** While they are reading, distribute the *Long Telegram* and the resource, *A Secret Analysis*. They will fill in their name at the top as the reporting officer.
- 5.** Ask them to complete the analysis sheets from their reading of the telegram (and remind them that it's called the "Long" Telegram for a reason!)
- 6.** The teacher can circulate and help them with the analysis and terminology and distribute an index card to each student.
- 7.** If they do not finish by end of class, assign the completion of their analysis for homework. Before they leave ask them to write their name and *one* word about the telegram on the card. Collect these as they leave.

Day Two

- 1.** When students return with completed analysis sheet, match them up into partners based on the index cards they turned in yesterday. The teacher should decide how to do so, but announces "Analyst" Joe with "Reporting Officer" Mary etc, to provide a little intrigue.
- 2.** Assign one student to play the role of President Truman at the end of the class period.
- 3.** Ask the partnerships to use the *Report to the President* and write a one-page report for President Truman of recommended action based on their reading of Kennan's telegram.
- 4.** Remind to write "TOP SECRET" on top and ensure that all grammar and spelling are correct.
- 5.** Collect the secret reports and hand them to President Truman. At the next class period (for extra credit), he or she will make an announcement to all of the analysts (class) on what he will do.

6. As soon as these reports are handed in, ask student to look at the Clark Clifford's report on the Truman Library web site listed above.

7. Did any of the analysts come up with ideas similar to those in that report?

Extension Activities:

- 1.** Learn more about the lives of George Kennan, Clark Clifford, George Elsey, and Arthur Frock.
- 2.** Do a computer search for the terms "contain" and "containment" and see what historical explanations are provided. There is some disagreement as to whom came up with the terms as policy.
- 3.** Debate whether the telegram reflects objective truth or a biased American point-of-view. ■